

will no longer have access to as they have known in the past because he is closing the roads and, in essence, putting up signs that almost say "no trespassing" to humans. That means hunters, that means campers, loggers, people who have traditionally gone into the woods to pick berries, to enjoy family outings, photographers, ranchers, Americans who enjoy our national forests.

Mr. Speaker, 41 million new acres can no longer be accessed by most Americans. Only the young and fit who are able to hike in wilderness conditions will be able to access our forests. With the stroke of a pen.

Mr. Speaker, what this does is actually destroys our forests and families and communities. This has a real human face on it, and it is a big problem.

#### BP AMOCO AND GM—PARTNERSHIP FOR CLEANER FUELS

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, starting today, the men and women and children of Chicagoland can breathe easier, thanks to the innovative and cooperative efforts of BP Amoco and General Motors. These two responsible corporate citizens today will announce that cleaner burning, low-sulfur gasoline will be distributed by Amoco and BP service stations throughout the Chicagoland area.

The resulting emissions reductions will be equivalent to removing 70,500 cars from Chicagoland's highways each day. That is more than three times the number of cars that enter Chicago on the Kennedy Expressway each day during the morning rush hour.

BP Amoco and GM are not waiting for government mandates, they are not waiting for consumer demand, they are not waiting for someone else to take the lead, and they are not waiting for air quality in Chicago to get better on its own. To top things off, BP Amoco will continue to use ethanol in the Chicagoland area. They have chosen to support the farmers of America's heartland while improving the air quality of our cities.

Thanks to their innovative corporate partnership, BP Amoco and General Motors are working to address air quality issues using new and creative approaches.

□ 1030

#### PRAISING SENATE REPUBLICANS FOR VOTING TO TURN DOWN THE TEST BAN TREATY

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, we have heard this morning individuals from the other side of the aisle criticize turning down the nuclear test ban treaty over in the Senate.

I am disappointed that there was partisanship on the part of the Democrats, that all those Democrats in the Senate voted for that test ban treaty, despite the fact that six former Secretaries of Defense urged the Senate to vote it down, four former Secretaries of Energy urged the Senate to vote it down, four former CIA directors urged the Senate to turn it down; (that includes two of the directors in the CIA appointed by President Clinton, Jim Woolsey and John Deutch), two former national security advisers, urged the Senate to turn it down; four former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called the Senate saying it was going to tremendously jeopardize the security of this country if they voted for it.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important that as we look at all this expert advice and all of the additional retired generals and admirals that have come forward urging a "no" vote, there is no question in my mind, we have done this country a security favor by turning down this particular test ban treaty. Good going, Senate Republicans, for doing what is right.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). All Members are reminded that they are to refrain from characterizing the actions of the Senate.

#### THE EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN IS CRITICAL TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

(Mr. ROYCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, in my view, nothing is more important to the future of this country than the education of our children. Our kids are going to be the future doctors, the future scientists. They are going to be our future leaders. As such, we want to assure that they have the best education possible.

This comes down to a question of who knows best how to develop that curriculum. Who should be developing that curriculum? Should it be the teachers? They are in the classroom. Or should it be some bureaucrat miles and miles away? Should it be some bureaucrat in Washington, D.C. that develops that curriculum?

The Federal Government today operates 760 Federal education programs, 39 different Federal education agencies. This is \$100 billion that we spend on

education. Yet, public education for some reason is worse than it was 20 years ago. It is worse.

We can improve education by shifting decision-making power towards principals, teachers, parents, and people who have a direct impact on learning. That is why I am pleased to have cosponsored the Dollars to the Classroom resolution, which urges the Department of Education to spend 95 percent in the classroom.

#### WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2684, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 328 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 328

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2684) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

SEC. 2. House Resolution 300 is laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Rules, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 328 is a rule providing for the consideration of the VA-HUD conference report which provides funding in fiscal year 2000 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency, among other programs.

The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

Mr. Speaker, today, with the passage of this rule and the VA-HUD conference report, Congress will be one step closer to meeting our budget goals for the year 2000; namely, maintaining a balanced budget without raiding the social security trust fund to pay for it.

We have fought long and hard to achieve a balanced budget by making

the tough decisions necessary to reduce Federal spending, shrink the size of government, and reform Federal programs.

It has not been easy, change never is, but our work has met with success, which has emboldened our cause. Just this week the Congressional Budget Office reported that in fiscal year 1999, for the first time in 40 years, we experienced a true budget surplus, without touching a dime of the social security trust fund.

That means that we have transitioned from a pattern of deficit spending to a new era of balanced budgets, and now to a more honest method of budgeting that really places social security off limits.

Mr. Speaker, we have turned a corner, and it is no time to look back. Today Congress will continue down this path of fiscal discipline and integrity as we consider the VA-HUD conference report.

I am pleased to report that this conference report is the product of negotiating and consensus between Congress and the President, who worked together to come up with adequate funding for a variety of priority programs.

Not only were the levels of funding in the bill agreed to in the spirit of cooperation, but the offsets, which ensured that the bill meets our goals of protecting social security, were also approved on a bipartisan basis.

The VA-HUD conference report reaches a balance by actually reducing spending below last year's level while adding resources to our top priorities, not the least of which is support for our Nation's veterans.

While we can never fully repay the debt we owe to those who were willing to sacrifice their lives for our freedom, it is worth noting that this conference report provides for the largest increase in veterans health care programs in a decade. The \$1.7 billion increase the conference report provides will bring spending on veterans health care to a total of \$19 billion. That is just for next year.

In addition to helping veterans, this bill addresses the critical housing needs of our most vulnerable populations. For the poor and homeless in our society, the VA-HUD conference report provides an increase of over \$2 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Housing for our Nation's elderly will see an increase of \$50 million over last year. Disabled housing will receive an additional \$5 million, and the people living with AIDS who are served by the HOPWA program will see a boost of \$7 million.

Moreover, the Housing Certificate Fund, which fully funds Section 8 renewals and tenant protections, is funded at \$11 billion, which is significantly more than the President's budget request.

But, funding for HUD is not just about housing. The Department also promotes community development. I am pleased that added to the conference report is \$55 million to fund the designated empowerment zones across our Nation.

With the blessing of the Federal Government, these communities have worked to develop strategies to attract investment, revitalize their neighborhoods, and create jobs. But their plans rely on a commitment of assistance by the Federal Government that we should honor. The conference report will help us meet that commitment by providing some \$3.5 million for each urban empowerment zone, as well as \$15 million in grant money for rural empowerment zones and enterprise community programs.

The VA-HUD conference report also finances the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which it seems we have to call on far too often as our citizens have seen their communities ravaged by hurricanes, floods, or fire.

In times of true emergencies and catastrophic loss, our Federal Government has a responsibility to reach out and help people put their lives back together. The conference report provides \$300 million for FEMA, as well as \$2.5 billion in emergency disaster relief, which matches the President's request.

At the same time, this legislation addresses the most pressing concerns of those who need our help today. It also invests in future generations through the funding for environmental protection and scientific research. For example, the EPA will receive more funding than the President requested. However, these dollars will be focused on local efforts to address pollution, particularly the States' efforts to ensure clean water and safe drinking water for their citizens. In addition, State Air Grants will be fully funded at the level requested by the President.

When the House first debated the VA-HUD appropriations bill back in August, many Members expressed their concerns about maintaining our commitment to scientific research in our Nation's space program. At that time, the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) made a commitment to working in conference to improve the level of funding for these programs, and he has.

The National Science Foundation will see an increase of \$240 million over last year, and NASA will receive more than \$13.5 billion, which is \$75 million more than the President requested.

Mr. Speaker, all told, this bill is a testament to the commitment this Congress has made to responsible government in the context of a balanced budget. In the case of the VA-HUD conference report, we have achieved these goals on a bipartisan basis with the President's cooperation.

So I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in support of

this rule, so we can continue our march towards a responsible, honest Federal budget that keeps our eye on the ball and our hands off of social security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on the rule and the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleagues, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) for their very hard work in bringing this conference report to the floor. I also want to congratulate them for putting together such a strong, bipartisan bill.

Although the conference report had a very rocky beginning, I am very happy to see my colleagues on both sides of the aisle manage to come up with a bill that funds so many important programs.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, increases spending for the veterans health care programs by \$1.7 billion, the largest increase in 10 years. That is one that is long overdue. Too many of our veterans have not been getting the health care they deserve, but this bill will help change that.

This bill also funds the Environmental Protection Agency, which helps keep our air and water clean, as well as supervising the cleanup of Superfund sites. This bill funds NASA and the International Space Station, and although earlier versions of the bill might have cost the United States its leadership in space exploration, Mr. Speaker, this version of the bill will not. It deserves our full support.

This bill also provides for \$2.4 billion in emergency spending to help people recover from Hurricane Floyd, which is still having a very devastating effect in North Carolina.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this bill will address some of our critical housing needs. It will provide housing for the Nation's elderly and disabled. It will also help modernize our public housing, which is falling into disrepair. Finally, Mr. Speaker, it would fund Section 8 renewals and 60,000 new housing vouchers.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially pleased to see the new housing vouchers. As a youngster, I lived in the country's first public housing, and I know what a tremendous help that can be.

Today we are having a terrible affordable housing shortage, especially in my home city of Boston. Nationwide there are still 5.3 million low-income families who get no housing assistance at all. People who want Section 8 housing have to wait an average of 2 years to get it. These additional funds included in this bill will help put decent housing within the reach of more hard-working American families.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule for the VA-HUD appropriations

conference report. This bill keeps our promises to our veterans, it protects our environment, it helps keep roofs over the heads of low-income disabled and elderly Americans, and it helps make repairs after natural disasters, and turn scientific research on the heavens into real answers for today's problems here on Earth.

I thank my colleagues on the VA-HUD conference committee again for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise not only in support of the rule, but also in support of this conference report. I want to commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), as well as the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) for his leadership in putting together a good bill.

I would also like to note that this legislation is historical from a veteran's standpoint. The fact that we are providing \$1.7 billion more in funding for veterans health care this year, historically the largest increase in veterans health care in history, it says that veterans are a priority.

□ 1045

Particularly as our veterans reach retirement age, particularly as so many of our veterans are now World War II and Korea veterans at the age where health care is a greater need, we are making that commitment. I salute the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies for producing this good bill.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of other provisions that I also want to acknowledge and express my appreciation for this House in producing some real results. I represent the south side of Chicago in the south suburbs.

We have a project in this part of Illinois which is so important, not only to residents in the City of Chicago, but the south suburbs because it provides flood relief as well as protects the drinking water of people of Chicago and the entire Chicago metropolitan area. That is the Deep Tunnel Project, a flood control project which prevents, when there is heavy rains and storm water, prevents, frankly, raw sewage from being flushed out into Lake Michigan, which is a source of drinking water.

This House continues to make a commitment to complete this important environmental project. I want to thank the subcommittee for the \$5 million that was included to continue development of this project to protect our Lake Michigan drinking water.

Second, I also want to commend this House for overturning the President's

recommendation on Federal veterans' nursing home grant funding. The President's budget recommended slashing this important program which provides matching grants to the States to develop and operate nursing homes for our veterans.

I would point out that State homes provide a savings in providing health care. In fact, the State homes for veterans costs about \$40 per day per patient, whereas VA nursing care is about \$255 a day. So it is a bargain.

The President, in his budget, proposed cutting by more than half this important program. It is currently funded at \$90 million. The President proposed cutting it to \$40 million.

I am pleased that this House disagreed. I am pleased that this House restored funding for veterans nursing home grants. It is important to States like Illinois.

Illinois has a lot of veterans in need of nursing home care. In fact, in my own district, La Salle Veterans Home has over 200 veterans on a waiting list. Imagine this, if one has a friend or relative, a family member who is in need of nursing home care, and the waiting list is over a year, maybe a year and a half they have to wait in order to have access to this veterans home.

This is good legislation. We restored the funding.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), the ranking member of the Committee on Rules, for yielding me this time. I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), chairwoman now of the Committee on Rules who is in place for the chairman in presenting this rule.

I particularly thank the ranking member and the chairman of the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies. I call this bill relief, R-E-L-I-E-F. I hope that my spelling is correct on the floor of the House, because it does connote relief. I thank them for this very good bill.

Tomorrow I will have the opportunity to speak to a group of my paralyzed veterans. I will be able to give them some relief, particularly with the emphasis on the \$11.4 billion for housing, but with special emphasis on veterans health.

If I ever get any questions in my meetings with constituents, invariably there is a veteran there who asks about the care and the health care that is needed for the veterans that are there now and those who will be coming after.

This restoration on the dollars that have been put in this bill for veterans health care is imperative. So I will be able to say to my paralyzed veterans and other veterans that we did not forget them. In my hometown of Houston,

there are some 20,000 plus individuals on the waiting list for housing.

I would like to speak a little bit about section 8 housing certificates, the kinds of opportunity that it gives to families who are trying to get a leg up on the ladder of opportunity.

This \$11.4 billion for section 8 housing will do a lot to bring down the thousands of those who are on the list waiting for opportunity in housing.

My mayor has committed, and I join him, in increasing the numbers of those who own homes in the city of Houston. We are working on that. We believe in affordable housing. But at this juncture, there are those who are simply waiting for a decent apartment.

Section 8 certificates will give families, single parents with children, grandmothers, and grandfathers raising children the opportunity to live in decent housing. Section 8 is an equalizer. It distributes individuals throughout communities. It creates a sense of neighborhood. I applaud the increase in dollars.

I thought for once that we were going to forget the place that America held in the Space Program of the world, but I am delighted that we have restored the \$998.9 million, therefore giving NASA \$13.7 billion. If that had not occurred, we would have seen the closing of centers like NASA, Johnson, Huntsville, Kennedy. We would have seen enormous loss of jobs. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we would have seen us lose our place in the world stage of space exploration.

I am delighted that AmeriCorps has been funded, the National Science Foundation. This is a bill that provides for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that should be passed for we have responded to the needs of the American citizens, and we protected Social Security.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies, for his hard work on this bill and for the results he was able to achieve.

As the gentleman well knows, I have spoken to him a number of times about the importance of science. I have also spoken to many other colleagues and to this Chamber. Scientific research and development is the single biggest factor today in the economic growth of our Nation. If we do not continue to support our scientific and technological enterprise, we are throwing away our economic future. It is just that simple, and it is that stark.

When we look at the world scene, we notice that our spending on basic

science, mathematics, engineering and technology research, is declining compared to our gross domestic product. Japan is now ahead of us and increasing their spending in that area. South Korea is coming up fast and has almost surpassed us on a per capita basis, and Germany already is above us as well.

So we are in danger of losing our economic leadership on this planet by virtue of losing our leadership of scientific and technological research. It is very important that we continue that. The gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) recognizes that.

Unfortunately, the allocation that was given to him earlier in the year did not permit him to provide full funding for science. But, fortunately, the final allocation was increased; and he did a magnificent job of restoring the funding, not only to the National Science Foundation, which is the key to our research future, but also restoring the funding to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, better known as NASA.

I just want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) from the bottom of my heart, and thank him also on behalf of the many scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and technologists in this country for the work that he has done on this budget. It is a magnificent piece of work, in particularly difficult times, and I certainly appreciate it.

I also want to mention a personal interest in terms of clean water activity. We still have a long ways to go in this country in purifying our water and making it pure. The gentleman from New York has provided appropriate funding for that purpose as well.

In addition, Housing and Urban Development has some wonderful programs. There are some that need cleaning up, but there are some wonderful programs in HUD.

Michigan, in particular, through its Michigan State Housing Development Authority, has done a great deal to provide low-income home ownership opportunities for the people of our State, particularly in my area where we have some faith-based organizations which have developed to take advantage of both MSHDA and HUD funding and have done a magnificent job. I want to especially mention Habitat for Humanity and a local homespun organization we have, the Inner City Christian Federation. The latter has been phenomenally successful.

We have done better at providing home ownership opportunities for low-income individuals than almost anywhere in this country. They are totally dependent on the HUD and MSHDA funding.

I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and the members of the committee for their good work. I urge adoption of the rule and passage of the conference report.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me remind my colleagues that this rule is customary for the consideration of appropriations conference reports.

Further, the conference report itself is the product of bipartisan cooperation between the President and the Congress. The White House worked with the conference committee to ensure that its priorities were funded, and the President agreed to the provisions in the bill that ensure its fiscal responsibility.

This bill contains many good things that I know my colleagues can support, including the largest increase in veterans health care spending in a decade, increased funding for numerous housing programs, restored funding for important science programs in NASA, and funding for emergencies and disasters that matches the President's request.

All of this, and still the conference report maintains our commitment to a balanced budget while keeping Social Security off limits. We made the tough decisions. We prioritized, and we have a good work product to show for it.

I can congratulate the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) and all the conferees who made this process work.

I urge support for the rule and the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2684) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2684, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 328, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2684) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 328, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of October 13, 1999, at page H9983.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH).

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is a terrific day to be here, I think, with the results that we have. It has been a remarkable process beginning back in the spring, the hearings over these many, many different and, by definition, sundry departments, lots of priorities with competing needs. I think that the process worked its way through in a very nonpartisan fashion. Mostly, the competition is between the Departments within the bill.

We had wonderful cooperation from the minority. Specifically the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, was very, very constructive and very, very helpful all the way along, not only in helping us establish priorities, but in getting votes to pass the bill as we first came through the House. I owe him a deep debt of gratitude. He had a very difficult personal period at the same time, and he just kept moving forward with us. Without him, we could not have been successful. So I thank the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN).

I also thank his staff and my staff who worked so well together, and also the members of the Senate, Senator BOND who chaired the conference, and Senator MIKULSKI, the ranking Democrat from the Senate.

We felt that, by working out the issues amongst ourselves before we sat down and discussed these issues with the White House, we would be in better shape to bring the priorities together. That is what we did.